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The Throne of Worship: An 'Archaeological Tell' of Religious Rivalries

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Abstract

The throne of worship, which is typically a colourful grotesque of theriomorphic theologemes that is to be visualized similarly in both internal and external worship, is a common feature of most surviving tantric literature. We may often read of ritual and doctrine being locked in so close an embrace that the one may not

¹ I would like to thank the organizers of the workshop, Dr Christine Chojnacki and Dr Najaf Haider, for inviting me to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, to give this paper, especially the former for pressing me to complete a written article after I had seen how different my subject was from those of the other learned contributions. A first attempt at tackling this subject was delivered as a paper in Heidelberg in November 2003 at an international workshop organized as part of the Ritualdynamikprojekt of that university. I am therefore grateful to those who invited me and stimulated my thoughts at that time, particularly Dr Srilata Raman, Dr Ute Huesken and Dr Jörg Gengnagel. Since then, I have learnt more about the tantric traditions, notably through the workshops organized as part of a Franco-German three-year project entitled 'Early Tantra: Discovering the Interrelationships and Common Ritual Syntax of the Śaiva, Buddhist, Vaiṣṇava and Saura Traditions'. This project was launched in 2008 by Professor Harunaga Isaacson (Hamburg University) and myself and is co-funded by the Agence Nationale pour la Recherche and the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. I would like to thank also the people who have sent me improving suggestions on drafts of this article, in particular Harunaga Isaacson, Marion Rastelli and Michael Slouber.

The following current abbreviations are used in the present article: EFEO = École française d'Extrême-Orient; GOML = Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras; IFI = Institut Français d'Indologie; IFP Institut Français de Pondichéry/French Institute of Pondicherry; KSTS = Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies; NAK = National Archives of Kathmandu; NGMPP = Nepal–German Manuscript Preservation Project; SP1 = Hélène Brunner (ed. and trans.), *Somaśambhupaddhati, Première Partie. Le rituel quotidien dans la tradition śaivite de l'Inde du Sud selon Somaśambhu*. Publications de l'IFI No. 25.1 (Pondicherry: IFI, 1963); SP4 = Hélène Brunner (ed. and trans.), *Somaśambhupaddhati. Rituels dans la tradition śaivite selon Somaśambhu. Quatrième partie: rituels optionnels: pratiṣṭhā*. Publications de l'IFI No. 25.4. (Pondicherry: IFI, 1998); T = Transcript; TAK = Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa II, *Dictionnaire des termes techniques de la littérature hindoue tantrique*. A Dictionary of Technical Terms from Hindu Tantric Literature. *Wörterbuch zur Terminologie hinduistischer Tantrén*. sous la direction de H. Brunner, G. Oberhammer et A. Padoux. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 714 = Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 44. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004).

be interpreted without the other² and it is certainly true that their relationship can very often be demonstrated. Indeed, one article known to me demonstrates it with respect to the throne of worship: Sanderson³ has pointed out that the enthronement of the three deities—Parā, Parāparā and Aparā—on the tips of a trident that rises above the enthroned corpse of Sadāśiva is intended to express that the Trika has transcended, among other systems, the Śaiva Siddhānta. It is noteworthy, however, that we should find not only that the enthronement of the principal deity should be an almost universal feature of tantric cults but also that many elements of the throne are the same or more than coincidentally similar in different systems. The most widespread common feature of thrones is that of a lotus resting upon a *pīṭha* that has at least four legs in the intermediate directions, these legs being formed by lions as incarnations of entities that have the names of the four positive qualities of the *buddhi*, namely, *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aīśvarya*. Furthermore, we find both Śaiva and Pāñcarātra accounts in which the mantras of these entities involve the four so-called ‘neuter’ vowels. Thus, the rituals of these cults may be shown to express or reinforce doctrinal truths, but we cannot in such cases always assume that their original ‘sense’ is shining through: expression of doctrine must often rather be the result of successful secondary reinterpretation. Plainly, an examination of thrones furnishes evidence of the kind that led to Sanderson’s observation that ‘[t]he ritual systems taught in the Śaiva and Pāñcarātrika Saṃhitās resemble each other so closely in morphology and syntax that they have the appearance of two dialects of a single “Tantric” language.’⁴ In this article I will attempt an exploration of some textual accounts of thrones and I hope to provide a ‘footnote’ to Sanderson’s observation, which although is itself part of a footnote, deserves a more prominent place and, of course, examination in not a few further ‘footnotes’.

Keywords

History of religion, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, ritual, visualization, enthronement, pūjā

The throne of worship appears to be, if not a cultural constant, at least a very widespread characteristic of theistic worship in South Asia: meditating upon a divinity requires that the worshipper first mentally prepares a regal throne on

²For example, Marion Rastelli, *Philosophisch-theologische Grundanschauungen der Jayākhyasaṃhitā. Mit einer Darstellung des täglichen Rituals*. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 668 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), 195; Richard Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe: Worshipping Śiva in Medieval South India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) x.

³Alexis Sanderson, ‘Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity in the Trika of Kashmir’, in *Mantras et diagrammes rituels dans l’hindouisme*, ed. André Padoux (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1986), 169–214.

⁴Alexis Sanderson, ‘History through Textual Criticism in the Study of Śaivism, the Pāñcarātra and the Buddhist Yoginītantras’, in *Les sources et le temps. Sources and Time. A colloquium. Pondicherry 11–13 January 1997*, ed. François Grimal. Publications du département d’indologie 91 (Pondicherry: IFP/EFO, 2001 [appeared in 2002]), 1–47; 38, fn. 50.

which that divinity may be installed. It is clear that some slick 3D computer graphics here would be enormously useful. Equipped with a slowly expandable and fully rotatable projection of such a throne of worship, I might have shown, with all the appropriate colours, every stage in its visualization and pointed out, for instance, that that saffron-coloured lion to be seen in the South-east is the embodiment of *jñāna*. Without such computer graphics, this throne will have to be imagined from verbal description. But the absence of a graphic representation should serve to remind us of an aspect of this visualization meditation that we might otherwise pass over unremarked, and that is that visualizing this elaborate structure and the colours and attributes of all the creatures and divinities in it and of the deity enthroned upon it requires considerable mental virtuosity.

The description with which I shall start follows two accounts given by the twelfth-century Saiddhāntika Aghoraśiva, that of his *Kriyākramadyotikā*, a ritual manual still accorded authority in Śaiva circles in Tamil-speaking South India today, and that of his *Pañcāvaraṇastava*, a hymn to Śiva enthroned and surrounded by a retinue of divinities ranged in five rings around him.⁵ The imagining of such a throne was an integral part of the worship of the god, whether performed externally, using the support of, for instance, a *liṅga*, or internally, within one's own body.⁶ This explains why the accounts of the throne, when they explain what is to be imagined and 'installed', sometimes give parts of the body as reference points and sometimes sections of the *liṅga* or stones that are beneath it.⁷

⁵ The account of the *Kriyākramadyotikā* of Aghoraśivācārya, together with a commentary by Nirmalamāṇi, is to be found on pp. 87–95 of the edition of Rāmaśāstrin and Ambalavāṇajñānasambandhaparāśaktisvāmin (Chidambaram, 1927), and that of the *Pañcāvaraṇastava* of the same author (in *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya: A Twelfth-century South Indian Prescription for the Visualisation of Sadāśiva and His Retinue*. An annotated critical edition by Dominic Goodall, Nibedita Rout, R. Sathyānarayanan, S.A.S. Sarma, T. Ganesan, S. Sambandhaśivācārya. Collection Indologie 102. Pondicherry: IFP/EFEO, 2004, appeared 2005) is given in verses 17–27.

⁶ The *Somaśambhupaddhati*, ed. K.M. Subrahmaṇyaśāstrin (Devakōṭṭai: Śivāgamasiddhāntaparipālanasaṅgha, 1931) (SP1, III: 102c–03) makes explicit that all sorts of supports are possible for *śivapūjā*:

*nijamūrtau guror mūrtau pustake salile 'nale
citrāḍau sthaṇḍile vāpi liṅge 'py atyantam uttamam
yajanaṁ bahudhā śambhor yathādr̥ṣtam udāhṛtam.*

'The various manners of worshipping Śiva have been described [by me above] as I have seen them—[it may be accomplished] in one's own body, in the body of the guru, in a book, in [a pot containing] water, in fire, in a picture or the like, or on the bare ground, but [worship of Śiva] in the *liṅga* is the best by far.'

In the KSTS edition this is 217c–218: see *Karmakāṇḍakramāvalī* of Somaśambhu, ed. Jagaddhar Zadoo (Srinagar, 1947) (KSTS 73).

⁷ It may also partly explain why we find the construction of such an elaborate visualized throne, which is necessarily invisible to any onlooker, not only in ancient works that appear to treat only the practice of individual initiates but also in post-twelfth-century scriptures that are devoted to public worship in temples, such as the *Pūrva-Kāmika*, which many temples in South India today claim to follow, in manuals based upon such scriptures, such as the *Parārthanityāpūjāvidhi* (see Brunner, 'Le Parārthanityāpūjāvidhi', 292–93), and in the self-consciously non-āgamic manual of the great temple of Chidambaram, the *Cidambareśvaranīyāpūjāsūtra*, attributed to Patañjali (*khaṇḍa* 15); Hélène Brunner, 'Le Parārthanityāpūjāvidhi. Règle pour le culte quotidien dans un temple', in *Tiruvannamalai*.

What I intend here to focus upon is the imagined visual aspect of the throne, but it should not be forgotten that it is typically, and certainly for Aghoraśiva, built of mantras accompanied by visualizations. Now it may seem that every element and every name cries out for explanatory annotation, but for much of this I must refer the reader to the lengthy notes to our edition of the *Pañcāvaraṇastava*.

Aghoraśiva's Throne of Worship

At the very base, in the turtle-stone (*kūrmaśilā*) below the *liṅga*, the initiate should worship the Ādhāraśakti, the power which supports the universe. She is as white as the ocean of milk and has, or bears on her head, the coiled form of a sprout emerging from a seed. (In the latter case, she carries a noose and elephant-goat.)

Above is Ananta, the lord of mantras. He is white and situated in another stone below the *liṅga* called the Brahmaśilā, on the lotus that is *māyā* ('primal matter').⁸ The lotus has its bulb in the bottom-most reality-level of the cosmos, namely, the *tattva* of earth, and its stalk rises to the *tattva* of *kalā* ('limited power to act'), which is the highest reality-level within the impure universe, the part of the cosmos that derives from primal matter, and its thorns are the mental and emotional proclivities (*bhāva*).

Forming the legs of a throne in the intermediate directions, of North-east (NE), South-east (SE), South-west (SW) and North-west (NW), are to be visualized four lions, seen facing each others' backs, who are red, white, yellow and black, and who are the embodiments of Righteousness, Knowledge, Dispassion and Control (*dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*), which are powers of Śiva's demiurge Ananta, and they represent the four *yugas*. Forming supportive struts between these legs are four lion-faced humans, each with three eyes, their arms rigid against their sides and their heads and feet glued to the lion-legs. They are bicoloured and are embodiments of *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairāgya* and *anaiśvarya*.

Above the throne is the red cushion of *māyā*, called the *adhaśchadana*, which is to be placed in the SW, and above that the white cushion of *śuddhavidyā*, to be placed in the NE. Sitting on these is a lotus with ruby bulb, blue stalk, coral-tipped shoots, silver petals and golden pearl-tipped stamens and a pericarp with

Un lieu saint śivaïte du Sud de l'Inde. 3. Rites et fêtes. Supplément: Le Parārthanityapūjāvidhi. Règle pour le culte quotidien dans un temple, ed. Françoise L'Hernault and Marie-Louise Reiniche, with a supplement by Hélène Brunner. Publications de l'EFEU 156.3 (Paris: EFEU, 1999), 263–340. The latter work is printed as part of the *Cidambaraṣṭrasarvasva* in *Sri Chidambara Kshetra Sarvasvam*, ed. Somasetudīkṣita. Rājamahendravaram (= Rajahmundry, AP), 1977, or in *Chidambara Kshetra Sarvasvam*, vol. 2 (*Sri Chitsabhesotsava Sūtram*) by Bhagavan Patanjali, ed. Soma Sethu Dikshitar (Chidambaram: M.S. Trust, 1982).

⁸ Śiva's demiurge Ananta holds sway throughout the cosmos, and yet he transcends primal matter, which goes some way to explaining why he is here said to be above *māyā* even though he is also at the base of the throne. But there is of course more to be said about the matter: For a fuller commentary, see Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 118–20.

the lustre of molten gold that contains the fifty phonemes as seeds. It is the lotus of *śuddhavidyātattva*, the reality-level of ‘pure knowledge’.

On its stamens are to be placed eight Śaktis called Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī, Kālī, Kalavikaraṇī, Balavikaraṇī, Balapramathinī and Sarvabhūṭadamanī. These are red and four-armed. On the pericarp is the ninth Śakti, Manonmanī. Her appearance is similar, except that she is white.

Resting on the tips of the petals is a sun disc, presided over by Brahmā; on the tips of the stamens, a moon disc, presided over by Viṣṇu; on the pericarp, a fire disc, presided over by Rudra.⁹ Inside the pericarp is to be visualized the milk-ocean-white Kuṭilā ‘the crooked [power]’ as a Śakti-disc, presided over by Īśvara.

Thus, the divine *yoga*-throne (*yogapīṭha*) consists of the cosmos from the reality of earth up to Kuṭilāśakti.

Symbolism?

At this point, just when the throne is ready to receive its deity, Sadāśiva, we must break off and begin to consider what has been visualized. To help us do so, here is a schematic summary of the throne just described. (The numbers in bold refer to the corresponding verse numbers of the *Pañcāvaraṇastava*¹⁰ and are intended to help those interested in reading more to orient themselves in our annotation to that text.)

17

Ādhāraśakti in the Kūrmaśilā.

18

Ananta in the Brahmaśilā.

19–20

Dharma, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya* in the intermediate directions as lion-feet of the throne, and their opposites (*adharma* and so on) as cross-struts.

21

The two cushions (*chadana*) of *māyā* and *vidyā*.

22

An eight-petalled lotus in *śuddhavidyātattva*.

23–24

The nine Śaktis beginning with Vāmā, placed on the eight stamens (or petals), with the last, Manonmanī, on the pericarp.

⁹ I omit here the visualizations of Brahmā and the other divinities.

¹⁰ Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*.

25

The three discs of sun, moon and fire, presided over by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra.

26

The Śakti-disc (*śaktimaṇḍala*), presided over by Īśvara, placed in the pericarp.

27

Thus is the *yoga*-throne, which reaches from earth to Kuṭilā (=śuddhavidyātattva?).

28–42

Sadāśiva, the central deity, enthroned.

I would like to recall at this point one of the themes I mentioned in the abstract, by quoting a general statement by Davis, ‘Śaiva *pūjā* acts as a virtual précis of Śaiva siddhānta theology, a daily catechism in action for worshippers who undertake it with diligence and mindfulness.’¹¹ More particularly, with regard to the throne, Davis observes that ‘The divine throne, much like the ritualist’s body in the rites of initiation and *ātmaśuddhi*, is a condensed ritual instantiation of the manifest cosmos and all its constituents.’¹²

Now this position certainly reflects the view of theologians such as Aghoraśiva, and there are abundant signs in pretty much every account that the throne should reflect the cosmos. But it seems also rather obvious to anyone who reads Saiddhāntika scriptures and theological writings that this throne is at best an extremely clumsy and obscure reflection of Śaiva cosmography. It is clumsy structurally, and obscure theologically. Without treating in full the structural oddities at this point, it seems to me particularly strange that the relation between Ananta and the four feet of the *pīṭha* should not be articulated.

As for the theological obscurity, it is noteworthy curious that rather few of the important entities that form the throne—that is, the entities for which there are mantras—is reflected in the plentiful accounts we have of Saiddhāntika cosmography. This milk-ocean-white Ādhāraśakti, variously identified with Kuṭilā, or Kuṇḍalinī, with Kriyāśakti (*Kriyākramadyotikā*) and with Icchāśakti (*Suprabheda*), is not mentioned in cosmographical contexts, nor is the Vidyēśa Ananta ever elsewhere put at the bottom of the universe, nor is there any other context whatsoever, cosmographical or not, in which the powers of Ananta called *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya* are mentioned. The two cushions (*chadana*) appear, to my knowledge, only once outside the context of the throne, in a passage of the *Mataniga*, a tantra whose throne, incidentally, does not include the two cushions.¹³ The nine Śaktis on the stamens and pericarp of the lotus-throne plainly have names extracted from the Vedic Vāmadeva mantra, but as for a

¹¹ Davis, *Ritual in an Oscillating Universe*, 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 124.

¹³ For more on these cushions, see Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 126–27.

special theological or cosmographical significance that justifies their being singled out among other possible names of Śaktis, and assigned the position they occupy in the throne, it is not clear what that might be.¹⁴ As for the three discs of the sun, moon and fire, these look as if they may, from the first, have been symbolic, but they are to be found homologized with so many triads that their value as mnemonic symbols of theologemes is questionable.¹⁵

Now, when we come to compare this with other throne-visualizations, it seems rather clear that, although we can see in the throne ‘catechism in action’ or a ‘ritual instantiation of the manifest cosmos’, it might actually be fairer to describe it as an archaeological tell of obscure and perhaps no longer central religious ideas that can, with judiciously distortive commentary, be made into a ladder of symbols reflecting the Śaiva cosmography.

Just to give a flavour of the dizzying heights of abstraction required to make all this ‘fit’ together theologically, here is just a fragment of Nirmalamāṇi’s (undated) commentary on Aghoraśiva’s twelfth-century version of the throne. He is commenting here on the mysterious three discs resting on the tips of the petals, the stamens and on the pericarp. Other than being correlated with sun, moon and fire, and with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, these three *maṇḍalas* are elsewhere homologized with the three divine powers of Knowledge, Action and Will (*jñāna*, *kriyā* and *icchā*),¹⁶ and with the object, agent and act of knowledge (*meya*, *mātr* and *māna*).¹⁷ Here is Nirmalamāṇi’s position¹⁸:

*etāni maṇḍalāni na lokasiddhāni bhuvarlokacārīni, api tu
jñānakriyecchāśaktīnām āvirbhāvādhikaraṇabhūtāni
ātmatattva vidyātattvaśivatatvavācyāni binduvikārāni, teṣāṃ lokasiddhānām
brahmāṇḍāntargatatvena divyaśiṃhāsane pragamāsambhavāt.
tadadhipatayaś ca na lokasiddhāḥ, kiṃ tu tadadhiṣṭhātrśaktiviśeṣā ity uktam*

¹⁴ They are treated as aspects of Śiva’s indivisible power and their names are analyzed and interpreted in *Parākhyatantra*, 2: 42–61. See *The Parākhyatantra, a Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta*. A critical edition and annotated translation, ed. and trans. Dominic Goodall, Collection Indologie 98 (Pondicherry: IFP/EFEQ, 2004).

¹⁵ For such homologizations, see below and also Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 131–33. Referring to the above-mentioned nine śaktis as a fourth disc, the *śaktimaṇḍala*, is perhaps an innovation of Aghoraśiva’s that may be partly inspired by an uncertain line from the *Svacchandatantra*, 2.71 (see *The Svachchanda-Tantra with commentary by Kshema Rāja*, ed. Madhusūdan Kaul Shāstrī, KSTS 31, 38, 44, 48, 51, 53, and 56 (Bombay, 1921–35). The structural purpose of the inclusion by Aghoraśiva of the *śaktimaṇḍala* here is, I suppose, to be able to add Īśvara to the previously visualized disc-rulers (*maṇḍalādhipati*) of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, thus allowing an unbroken sequence of a standard Saiddhāntika list of five deities of increasing status, the list of five Kāraṇeśas, which will be rendered complete with the enthronement of the fifth, Sadāśiva, as the principal deity of the religion: see Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 134.

¹⁶ Thus, Kṣemarāja’s *avatārikā* to *Svacchandatantra* 2: 72c–73b.

¹⁷ Thus, Kṣemarāja’s commentary on the same passage.

¹⁸ From the *Prabhāvyākhyā* on the *Kriyākramadyotikā*, 94.

*gurubhiḥ śrīmanmṛgendravṛttidīpikāyām. yad vakṣyati:
 aruṇābhaṃ smaren netraṃ dr̥kkriyecchātmakaṃ vibhoḥ
 tritattvarūpavahnyādimaṇḍalatritayāśrayam iti.
 yad vā icchājñānakriyāśaktayaḥ sūryasomāgnimaṇḍalāni.*

These discs [of sun, moon and fire] are not the commonly known [planetary bodies] that move in [the sky at the level of] Bhuvarloka, but rather evolutes of [the subtle sonic matter called] Bindu that may be referred to by [the names of the three constitutive principles of the universe] Ātmātattva, Vidyātattva and Śivatattva,¹⁹ and that are *loci* in which the three powers of Knowledge, Action and Will may appear, since the commonly known [planets], by the fact of their being contained within the cosmic egg of Brahṃā, could not extend into the divine lion-throne. And their regents [Brahṃā, Viṣṇu and Rudra] are not the commonly known [figures of those names], but rather particular powers that preside over them. This has been taught by the guru [Aghoraśiva] in his sub-commentary on the commentary on the venerable *Mṛgendratāntra*. And he says it [in the following verse]²⁰: ‘One should visualise [the mantra that is] the Lord’s [triple] eye as red, of the nature of Knowledge, Action and Will, which reside in the three discs of fire, [moon and sun], which are the three principles of Ātma, Vidyā and Śiva.’ Alternatively, the discs of sun, moon and fire are the powers of Knowledge, Action and Will.

Nirmalamāṇi here demonstrates just how unwieldy the throne of worship has become as a vehicle of doctrine: just as we have, at this level of the throne, sun, moon and fire that are not sun, moon and fire, ruled over by Brahṃā, Viṣṇu and Rudra who are not the ‘worldly’ divinities of those names, so too, lower down, we have an Ananta who is often given snake-like attributes placed at the bottom of the universe—or rather of the universe in microcosm that is the throne—who is nevertheless not the serpentine Ananta at the bottom of the universe, but rather the demiurge Ananta who belongs at its top, and he rests upon a tortoise that has no place in the Śaiva cosmography. Moreover, he bears above him entities called *dharma* (righteousness), *jñāna* (knowledge), *vairāgya* (dispassion) and *aśvarya* (power), which are widely known as the names of the four positive propensities of the intellect (*buddhidharma*) inherited from the Sāṅkhyas, and yet these entities are here not the properties of the intellect but instead powers that he possesses that preside over those properties.

The Throne of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*

What I should therefore like to do next is to consider other thrones, beginning with that of the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*, a scripture of the Pāñcarātra, the relative

¹⁹ The universe is, as is well known, divided into thirty-six constitutive principles in classical Śaivism, but shorter lists of *tattvas* that cover larger tranches of the cosmos are also known from early times, among which we find this list of three.

²⁰ The verse in question occurs in Aghoraśiva’s *Kriyākramadyotikā*, 108.

antiquity of which is established by the existence of palm-leaf Nepalese manuscripts. I am helped here by having Marion Rastelli's useful treatment of that text (1999)²¹ and her later article (2002) on thrones in three Pāñcarātra *Āgamas*, from which I will quote her brief summary of the throne:

The *āsana* that is described in the 12th chapter of the JS reaches from the penis to just below the heart and consists of the elements (1) *ādhāraśakti*, the power that supports the universe, (2) *kālāgni*, the fire that destroys the world, which is also called *kūrma*, the tortoise, (3) the snake Ananta, (4) the earth (*vasudhā*), (5) the ocean of milk (*kṣīrārṇava*), (6) a lotus, (7) the 16 bearers of the throne, namely, the four positive and the four negative conditions of the *buddhi* (*dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, *aiśvarya*, *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairāgya*, *anaiśvarya*), the four Vedas and the four *yugas*, (8) a white lotus, (9) the three *maṇḍalas* of sun, moon, and fire, (10) a throne called *bhāvāsana*, (11) and Garuḍa, the vehicle of Viṣṇu.²²

This account cuts down on most of the colourful detail, and it would perhaps be helpful to our purposes to expatiate on the visualizations of the sixteen feet of the throne. First *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya* are to be placed, exactly as in Śaiva texts, in the NE, SE, SW and NE. They are white men with lion faces. Then, in the cardinal directions, are to be placed *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairāgya* and *anaiśvarya*. They are red men (the colour of *bandhūka* flowers). In the interstitial directions East-North-East (ENE), East-South-East (ESE), West-South-West (WSW) and West-North-West (WNW) are to be placed the four Vedas, who have the form of yellow horses. And in the interstitial directions North-North-East (NNE), South-South-East (SSE), South-South-West (SSW) and North-North-West (NNW) are to be placed the four *yugas*, who have the form of black bulls.

Two things are, I think, immediately striking here. One is that, with so many shared elements, Aghoraśiva's and the *Jayākhyasamhitā*'s thrones must be related. Moreover, there are features of the *Jayākhyasamhitā*'s throne that do not figure in Aghoraśiva's account that are to be found in other, earlier, Saiddhāntika accounts. One of these, as I have mentioned in the introductory abstract, is that the mantras for them here involve the *napuṃsakacatuṣṭaya*, the four so-called neuter vowels of *ṛ* and *ḷ* and their long forms, just as they do in rather

²¹ Rastelli, *Philosophisch-theologische Grundanschauungen*.

²² Marion Rastelli, 'The *Āsana* According to the Pārameśvarasamhitā or a Method of Writing a Samhitā', in *Studies in Hinduism III. Pāñcarātra and Viśiṣṭādvaitavedānta*, ed. Gerhard Oberhammer and Marion Rastelli; Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 694 = Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 40 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), 9–32; 10.

various Śaiva works: the *Kiraṇa*, the *Pūrva-Kāmika*,²³ the *Somaśambhupaddhati*,²⁴ the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* and the *Kriyākālaguṇottara*.²⁵

The second striking thing is that one does not have to do nearly as much interpretative violence to the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā*'s throne for it to accord with the doctrines of that text. *Dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and the rest, for instance, can be exactly what their names suggest them to be: the eight properties of the intellect (*buddhidharma*) inherited from the Sāṅkhya thinkers. Furthermore, the Ananta at the bottom of the universe is, quite fittingly, the snake, also known as Śeṣa, who bears the universe.

As Rastelli observes,²⁶ the throne reflects two models of the cosmos, a rather Vaiṣṇava mythological one, involving such elements as the Kūrma, Ananta and the milk ocean, and the other a Sāṅkhya-influenced evolutionary model. Based just on what we have seen so far, it seems rather likely that in origin, that is to say from the moment he makes his appearance in the throne, this Ananta must be the serpent and not the demiurge Ananta, the overlord of mantras at the top of the universe, just as *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya* must, in origin, simply have been the four positive *buddhidharmas* inherited from the Sāṅkhyas. In a number of Śaiva accounts, none of which, admittedly, can be confirmed to be pre-twelfth century AD, Ananta is given the characteristics of a snake²⁷ or is said to be surrounded by the mythical snakes Vāsuki, Takṣaka, Kārkoṭaka, Padma, Mahāpadma, Śaṅkhaṇḍa and Gulika.²⁸

Notice too that Ananta in both cases sits upon a turtle (*kūrma*): In the *Jayākhyasaṃhitā* he lies upon the cosmic world-supporting turtle, and in Aghoraśiva's throne he is above the *kūrmaśilā*, one of the stones beneath the *liṅga*.

Furthermore, I suspect that there may have been borrowing between traditions at another level too, that of wording. There is no ocean of milk down at the bottom end of the Śaiva throne, but it is perhaps no coincidence that Ādhāraśakti is fairly consistently described, not just as white, but as 'white as the milk-ocean'.

²³ *Kiraṇatantra* 14.22cd and *Pūrva-Kāmika* 4.320ab. This falls in a passage of the *Pūrva-Kāmika* (4:320ab) (in *Kāmikāgama*, *Pūrvabhāga* and *Uttarabhāga*, no editor accredited, published by C. Swaminatha Gurukkal [Madras: South Indian Archaka Association, 1975 and 1988]) describing an alternative way of building the throne that is probably calqued upon *Kiraṇa* 14:19ff, 14:22cd (in *Śrīmatkīraṇāgamamahātāntram*, ed. Ti. Rā. Pañcāpagaśaśivācārya and K.M. Subrahmanyaśāstrī. *Śivāgamasiddhāntaparipālanasaṅgha*, vol. 16 [Devakoṭṭai, 1932]).

²⁴ *Somaśambhupaddhati* (mantras after SP4 IV: 7 [KSTS edn 1658b]).

²⁵ The latter two references I draw from Judit Törzsök's remarks on *gātraka* in TAK 2, 186: *Siddhayogeśvarīmata* (20:18) and *Kriyākālaguṇottara* (folio 111 recto).

²⁶ Rastelli, *Philosophisch-theologische Grundanschauungen*, 251.

²⁷ *Pūrva-Kāmika* 4:293: *anantaṃ nīlasaṃkāśaṃ anekaphaṇamaṇḍitam / hṛdaye 'ñjalisaṃyuktam ekavakraṃ caturbhujam*.

²⁸ Note also that in the *Mataṅgapārameśvara* (in *Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama* (*Kriyāpāda*, *Yogapāda* et *Caryāpāda*) avec le commentaire de Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha, ed. N.R. Bhatt. Publications de l'IFI No. 65 (Pondicherry: IFI, 1982), the Ananta of the throne is assigned a different mantra from that of Ananta the Vidyēśa (*kriyāpāda*, 1: 82–87). Brunner alludes to the possibility that Ananta at the bottom of the throne should be the serpent in her first published discussion of the throne (SP1, 158–60) and accepts it in one of her most recent works ('Le Parārthanityāpūjavidhi', 292, fn. 172).

Earlier Thrones

After identifying in the Śaiva throne awkwardnesses of structure, awkwardness in the identification of symbols, and elements that are shared with a non-Śaiva tradition, a logical next step is to look back at earlier accounts of the throne and see whether we can explain how these arise. Now Pāñcarātra scriptures that are almost certainly earlier than the *Jayākhyasamhitā* have recently come to light among the palm-leaf manuscripts microfilmed by the Nepal–German Manuscripts Preservation Project (NGMPP), thanks to the zeal of Dr Diwakar Acharya who is now engaged upon editing them, namely, the *Svāyambhuvapāñcarātra*, the *Devāmṛta* and the *Jayottara*. But although, as we have remarked, the *Jayākhyasamhitā*'s throne requires little interpretative violence to allow it to be read as a ladder of symbols of the cosmos that accords with the work's doctrines, and although one might therefore expect such a throne of worship to have originated in a Pāñcarātra milieu and to have been adopted from that milieu and adapted by rivalling Śaivas, we find no accounts of multi-tiered thrones of worship in those early Pāñcarātra scriptures; what we find instead are thrones whose only tier is that of the lotus blossom, which is set in a twelve-spoked wheel (as, for example, in Chapter 11 of the *Devāmṛta*).²⁹

Let us turn instead to the four Śaiva accounts of the throne of worship that I believe may be among the oldest to survive: those of the *Niśvāsattvasamhitā*, the earliest surviving Śaiva tantra³⁰; the *Svāyambhuvāsūtrasaṅgraha*, a doctrinally more developed tantra, but one which could have been no later than the seventh century AD³¹; the *Niśvāsakārikā*, an undated appendix to the *Niśvāsattvasamhitā*

²⁹ We should, however, at least mention what Rastelli ('The *Āsana* According to the *Pārameśvarasamhitā*', 18ff) calls the 'environment of worship' of the *Sātvatasamhitā*, another Pāñcarātra scripture that may be earlier than the *Jayākhyasamhitā* (ed. Embar Krishnamacharya. Gaekwad's Oriental Series 54, Baroda, 1931). She discusses this in her article on thrones of worship, but avoids calling this 'environment' a throne (*āsana*) because it is fundamentally different from the other thrones she examines, which are conceived in mythological and cosmographical terms, in that it presents the world as essentially consisting of sound (Rastelli, 'The *Āsana* According to the *Pārameśvarasamhitā*', 23). This 'environment of worship' is indeed less comparable with the thrones that we have been discussing than with Śaiva accounts of the yogic body, such as *Sārdhatriśatikālottara* 10:18–19 and 11:15ff (see *Sārdhatriśatikālottarāgama avec le commentaire de Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha*, ed. N.R. Bhatt, Publications de l'IFI No. 61 [Pondicherry: IFP, 1979]), passages which are almost equally mysterious and which also involve a downwards-pointing heart-lotus frequented by a soul-bee who is equated with language.

³⁰ See Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson, 'Workshop on the *Niśvāsattvasamhitā*: The Earliest Surviving Tantra?', *Newsletter of the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project* 3 (January–February 2007): 4–6.

³¹ The evidence for this is that the *Svāyambhuvāsūtrasaṅgraha* was commented upon by Sadyojyotiḥ, who, as Alexis Sanderson has shown ('The Date of Sadyojyotiḥ and Brhaspati', *Cracow Indological Studies* 8 [2006], 39–91, especially p. 76), was probably active between c. 675 and 725 AD. The *Svāyambhuvāsūtrasaṅgraha* has been edited by Veṅkaṭasubrahmaṇyaśāstrī (Mysore, 1937). See also NAK MS pam 348 vi jyautiṣam 80. NGMPP Reel No. A 30/6. Palm-leaf, early Nepalese 'Kuṭiḷa' script (= N). And Oriental Research Institute, Mysore, MS B776. Paper, Kannada script, partial apograph of MS P258 of the same library (for which see Goodall 2004, xcv–cii).

that cannot be later than the ninth century AD³²; and the *Śivadharmottara*, which is not a scripture of the Śaivasiddhānta, but rather a work teaching a form of Śaivism for pious laity.³³ (One other early account is not cited here, since it is

³² For evidence for this terminus, see Dominic Goodall, ed. and trans., *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Commentary on the Kiraṇatantra. Volume I: chapters 1–6. Critical edition and annotated translation*, Publications du département d'indologie 86.1 (Pondicherry: Institut français de Pondichéry/Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1998), xli–xlii, fn. 96.

³³ For the text of the *Śivadharmottara*, see Cambridge MSS Add. 1645 and Add. 1694. Palm-leaf, twelfth-century Newari script. Also IFP T. Nos. 75, 281 and 510, paper transcripts in Devanāgarī; NAK MS Pam̃ 738 (NGMPP A 11/3), palm-leaf, hooked Newari script; and NAK panc. 892/vi. 46 (NGMPP A12/3), palm-leaf, eighth- or ninth-century Nepalese script. This, along with other works of the Śivadharm corpus, has also been printed in: *paśupatināthadarśanam*, ed. Naraharīnātha. Kathmandu (kāṣṭhamāṇḍapa): Bṛhadādhyaṭmikapariśada, 1998 (saṃvat 2055). For a brief characterization of the *Śivadharm*-corpus, see Goodall, *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Commentary*, 375–76, fn. 616, and Alexis Sanderson, 'Religion and the State: Śaiva Officials in the Territory of the King's Brahmanical Chaplain', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47 (2005), 229–300, 231. Hazra, who has produced an article that characterizes the *Śivadharmottara*, the second work of that corpus, argues that it was probably composed between 700 and 800 AD; R.C. Hazra, 'The Śiva-dharmottara', *Purāṇa* 27, no. 1 (1983): 181–210; 206–07. Among his arguments for this rather late dating are his observation that the work makes reference to tantric literature, since it uses expressions such as *tantrārthavittama*. But it is in fact by no means certain that such expressions need to be understood to be references to the Mantramārga (tantric Śaivism). The professional religion that may be sensed as the dominant Śaiva current in the background behind this lay teaching seems more likely to be of the Atimārga (see Dominic Goodall, 'Who is Caṇḍeśa?', in *Genesis and Development of Tantra*, ed. Shingo Einoo [Tokyo: University of Tokyo, Institute of Oriental Culture, 2009], 351–423; 374–75, fn. 88), and this suggests (though by no means proves) a somewhat earlier date. The first work of the *Śivadharm*-corpus that unmistakably shows evidence of tantric influence is the *Śivadharmasaṅgraha*, as the forthcoming edition of Anil Kumar Acharya will show (see Goodall, 'Who is Caṇḍeśa?', 395, fn. 116), and that work seems both later than the *Śivadharmottara* and at the same time unlikely to be much later than eighth century AD, since the evidence of the seventh-century *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha* suggests that the form of the Mantramārga that the *Śivadharmasaṅgraha* reflects (that of the *Guhyasūtra* of the *Niśvāsa*) had by then been far superseded in doctrine, ritual and in terms of social religion. In short, the date of the *Śivadharmottara* is still unknown, but if I had to guess I would be inclined to place it at least a century earlier than does Hazra.

In a 2005 article devoted to the *Śivadharmottara* (Paolo Magnone, 2005, 'Śivadharmottarapurāṇa: A Survey', in *Epics, Khilas, and Purāṇas: Continuities and Ruptures. Proceedings of the Third Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, September 2002*, ed. Petteri Kosikallio [Zagreb: Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2005, 575–96]), Paolo Magnone expresses doubt about Hazra's dating, but he wishes to push the text considerably later than Hazra, arguing ('Śivadharmottarapurāṇa', 590–91) from the mention in the text of Nandināgarī script, which Magnone assumes to be the South Indian script of that name (neither Magnone nor Hazra appear to take into account the possibility that the label might refer to an earlier northern script).

I am not convinced by Magnone's arguments about date and provenance and it transpires, in fact, that the *Śivadharmottara* can indeed not be later than when Hazra places it, for an early Nepalese palm-leaf manuscript has come to light in a script that might be of the eighth or ninth century AD. The manuscript in question is NAK panc. 892/vi. 46, NGMPP A12/3. The edges of its forty-two disordered folios are damaged, with the result that foliation has been lost. The quoted passage that follows begins on NGMPP exposure number 20 and continues on 19 and then on 18.

cited and translated in Goodall et al.³⁴ and that is that of the *Sarvajñānottara*, a scripture of uncertain date but which shares an important archaism with the *Niśvāsataṭṭvasaṃhitā*, namely, the absence of what by the seventh century AD had become a defining characteristic of the Śaivasiddhānta, a beginningless impurity [*mala*] that blocks souls from realizing their innate omnipotence and omniscience.³⁵)

A Throne in the Heart: The *Śivadharmottara*

Let us begin with the non-Saiddhāntika *Śivadharmottara*. The context here is that of meditating upon the deity internally. An open lotus, whose bulb is located at the navel, sprouts up and blossoms in the heart, where the deity is installed.

*śucir vāpy aśucir vāpi*³⁶ *śivaṃ sarvatra cintayet*
*svadehāyatanasyāntar*³⁷ *manasā sthāpya śaṅkaram* 10:71
*hr̥tpadmapīṭhikāmadhye dhyānayajñena pūjayet*³⁸
*dhyānayajñāḥ*³⁹ *paraḥ śuddhaḥ sarvadoṣavivarjitaḥ*⁴⁰ 10:72
*teneṣṭvā muktim āpnoti*⁴¹ *bāhyaiḥ sthūlaiś ca nādhvaraiḥ*⁴²
jñānayogapradhānatvād antaraṅgaṃ vimuktidaṃ 10:73⁴³
bahiraṅgapradhānaṃ ca yajñādyam bhogasādhanaṃ
tasmāt svargīyam utsrjya karma yajñādyam adhravam 10:74
*śāśvataṃ mokṣadaṃ śuddhaṃ jñānadhyānaṃ samāśrayan*⁴⁴

³⁴ Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 152–53.

³⁵ For other scriptures that make no mention of *mala*, see Dominic Goodall, Kei Kataoka, Diwakar Acharya and Yuko Yokochi, 'A First Edition and Translation of Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's *Tattvatrayanirṇayavivṛti*, A Treatise on Śiva, Souls and Māyā, with Detailed Treatment of Mala', *South Asian Classical Studies* 3 (2008): 311–384; 315.

³⁶ *śucir vāpy aśucir vāpi* A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, T510, T281, T75; *sadā śivaparo bhūtvā* ed.

³⁷ *svadehāyatanasyāntar* A 12/3, A11/3, 1694, T281, ed.; *svadehāyatanasyāntar* 1645; *svadehāyatanam śāntam* T510, T75.

³⁸ *dhyānayajñena pūjayet* 1645, 1694, T281; *śivadyānena cintayet* A12/3, A11/3; *dhyānamārgeṇa pūjayet* T510, T75; *śivaṃ dhyānena cintaye* ed.

³⁹ *dhyāna*° A12/3, A11/3, 1694, 1645, T510, T281, Ed.; *dhyānam* T75.

⁴⁰ *paraḥ śuddhaḥ sarvadoṣavivarjitaḥ* A11/3, T75, T281, ed.; *paraḥ śuddhaḥ sarvadoṣaviva* - - ḥ A12/3; *paraḥ śuddhaḥ sarvadoṣavi* - - - 1694; *punaḥ śuddhaḥ sarvadoṣavivarjitaḥ* 1645; *paraś śāntaḥ sarvadoṣavivarjitaḥ* T510.

⁴¹ *teneṣṭvā muktim āpnoti* A12/3; T281, ed.; *teneṣṭā muktim āpnoti* A11/3, 1694, 1645; *iṣṭvā muktim avāpnoti* T510, T75.

⁴² *bāhyaiḥ sthūlaiś ca nādhvaraiḥ* T281; *bāhyaśuddhaś ca nādhvaraiḥ* A12/3; *bāhyaśuddhāś ca nādhvaraiḥ* A11/3, 1694, 1645, ed.; *bāhyai sthūlaiś ca sādharaiḥ* T510; *bāhyais sthūlaiś ca sādharaiḥ* T75.

⁴³ A11/3, 1645, T510, T281, T75 and ed. omit 10: 73c–75b.

⁴⁴ *samāśrayan* 1694; *samāśrayet* A12/3.

*himsādidoṣamuktatvād viśuddhaś cittasādhanaḥ*⁴⁵ 10:75
*dhyānayajñāḥ*⁴⁶ *paras tasmād apavargaphalapradah*
tasmād aśuddhaṃ svargīyaṃ anityaṃ bāhyasādhanaṃ 10:76
*yajñādyaṃ*⁴⁷ *karma santyajya muktyartham yogaṃ*⁴⁸ *abhyaset*
*vikāramuktam*⁴⁹ *avyaktaṃ bhogabhogyasamanvitam*⁵⁰ 10:77
*cintayed dhrdaye pūrvaṃ kramād vyāpi*⁵¹ *guṇatrayam*
*tamaḥ pracchādyā rajasā rajaḥ*⁵² *sattvena cchāditam*⁵³ 10:78
*dhyāyet trimāṇḍalam*⁵⁴ *pūrvaṃ kṛṣṇaṃ raktaṃ sitaṃ*⁵⁵ *kramāt*
*sattvopari*⁵⁶ *guṇātītaṃ puruṣaṃ pañcaviṃśakam* 10:79
*heyam*⁵⁷ *etad aśuddhaṃ ca tyaktvā śuddhaṃ vicintayet*
*aiśvaryapañkajaṃ*⁵⁸ *divyaṃ puruṣopari samsthitaṃ* 10:80
dvādaśāṅgulavistīrṇaṃ śuddhaṃ vikaṣitaṃ sitaṃ
*nālam*⁵⁹ *aṣṭāṅgulaṃ tasya nābhīkandasamudbhavam*⁶⁰ 10:81
*padmapatrāṣṭakam*⁶¹ *jñeyam animādiguṇāṣṭakam*
*tatkarṇikā ca vairāgyaṃ nālaṃ jñānaṃ śivātmakam*⁶² 10:82

⁴⁵ *viśuddhaś cittasādhanaḥ*] A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, T281, ed.; *viśuddhaṃ cittasādhanaḥ* T510; *viśuddhaṃ cittasādhanaṃ* T75.

⁴⁶ *dhyānayajñāḥ*] 1645, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *dhyānayogaḥ* A12/3, A11/3; *dhyāna...* 1694.

⁴⁷ *yajñādyaṃ*] 1645, 1694, T510, T75, ed.; *yajñādya*° A12/3, A11/3. Instead of this half-line, T281 places 74abcd and 75ab here.

⁴⁸ *muktyartham yogaṃ*] A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, ed.; *yogaṃ muktyartham* T510, T75.

⁴⁹ *vikāramuktam*] A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, T75; *vikārayuktam* T510, T281, ed.

⁵⁰ *avyaktaṃ bhogabhogyasamanvitam*] T510, T281, T75; *avyaktānbhoktr(?) samanvitam* A12/3; *avyaktaṃ bhogyaṃ bhojyasamanvitam* A11/3, 1645, 1694; *avyaktaṃ bhogyaabhoktr samanvitam* ed.

⁵¹ *kramād vyāpi*] T281; *kramāj jāyi* 1645, 1694; *kramād vāpi* A12/3, A11/3, T510, T75, ed.

⁵² *pracchādyā rajasā rajaḥ*] A12/3, A11/3, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *pra * dya rajasā rajaḥ* 1645; *pratya-jya rajasā raja* 1694.

⁵³ *cchāditam*] A11/3, 1645, 1694, ed.; *cchāditāḥ* A12/3; *cchādayet* T510, T281, T75.

⁵⁴ *dhyāyet trimāṇḍalam*] A11/3, 1645, 1694, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *dhyāyet trimāṇḍalam* A12/3.

⁵⁵ *kṛṣṇaṃ raktaṃ sitaṃ*] 1645, T510, T75, ed.; *kṛṣṇaraktasita*° A12/3, A11/3; *kṛṣṇaṃ raktaṃ sitaṃ* 1694; *raktakṛṣṇasitaṃ* T281.

⁵⁶ *sattvopari*] A11/3, 1645, 1694, T281, T75, ed.; *gatvopa...* A12/3; *tatopari* T510.

⁵⁷ *heyam*] A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, ed.; *dhyeyam* T510, T75; *dhyānam* T281.

⁵⁸ *aiśvaryapañkajaṃ*] A11/3, 1645, 1694, T281; *aiśvaryapañkaja*° A12/3; *aiśvaraṃ pañkajaṃ* T510, ed.; *eśvaraṃ pañkajaṃ* T75.

⁵⁹ *nālam*] A12/3, A11/3, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *nalam* 1645, 1694.

⁶⁰ *nābhīkanda*°] A12/3, 1645, 1694, T510, T281, ed.; *nābhīskanda*° A11/3; *nābhīkaṃdha*° T75.

⁶¹ *padma*°] MSS; *padmaṃ* ed.

⁶² *tatkarṇikā ca vairāgyaṃ nālaṃ jñānaṃ śivātmakam*] 1645, T510, T75, ed.; *tatkarṇikā...* *rajñānaṃ vairāgyanālaṃ uttamam* A12/3; *tatkarṇikā ca vairāgyaṃ nālaṃ jñānaśivātmakam* A11/3; *karṇikākeśaraṃ jñānaṃ nālaṃ vairāgyam uttamam* 1694; *tatkarṇikāpi vairāgya śivadharmamayaṃ param* T281. It is curious that our sources associate the parts differently here. Yet another homology is given in a passage attributed to the *Kālottara* quoted in the *Ātmārthapūjāpaddhati* (T.323, 168–69; T.282, 153 [with variants]): *vātule—*

nābhīmūlodbhavaṃ nālam aṣṭāṅgulaṃ athāyatam
dvādaśāṅgulavistīrṇaṃ sitapadmaṃ vicintayet
dharmajñānaṃ tathā nālaṃ vairāgyaṃ karṇikā guha
aiśvaryāṣṭadalopetaṃ karṇikākeśarair yutam
tatpadmakarṇikāmadhye liṅgaṃ mañimayaṃ śivam.

*śivadharmam ca tatkandam*⁶³ *iti padmam vicintayet*
*tad dharmajñānavairāgyaśivaiśvaryamayam*⁶⁴ *param 10:83*⁶⁵

Whether pure or impure, one should everywhere think upon Śiva: having mentally placed Śaṅkara inside the temple that is one's body, one should worship Him on the throne in the lotus of one's heart with the offering that is meditation (*dhyānayajñena*). The offering of meditation is the best [offering]; it is pure and devoid of all shortcomings (71–72). It is by offering that (*tenesṭvā*) that one obtains liberation, and not by gross, external sacrifices (73ab). Because it primarily consists in being connected to knowledge (*jñānayogapradhānavāt*), sacrifice and such that are internal are salvific, whereas when they are primarily external, they are [merely] the means towards special powers (*bhogasādhanaṃ*) (73c–74b). That is why one should give up sacrificing and other rites that lead [only] to heavens and that are impermanent, resorting [instead] to the eternal, salvific and pure meditation on knowledge (74c–75b). Because it is free of such faults as violence to others, the offering of meditation, which is pure and uses the mind as instrument, is the highest and it therefore leads to liberation (*apavargaphalapradah*) (75c–76b). Therefore one should abandon sacrifice and such acts that use external things as instruments and that are impure, that lead [only] to heaven and are [thus] impermanent and one should practise yoga to obtain liberation (76c–77b). First one should meditate in one's heart on the three *guṇas*, in due sequence, which pervade [the universe], free of transformation, unmanifest, containing all experience and objects of experience: *tamas* should be covered by *rajas*; *rajas* should be covered by *sattva* (77c–78). He should first meditate on [them as] three discs, black, red and white, in due order. Above *sattva*, beyond the *guṇas*, is 'soul' (*puruṣam*), the twenty-fifth [of the constitutive principles of the universe] (79). This is impure and should be abandoned; having rejected it, one should focus on what is pure: above *puruṣa* is situated the divine lotus of Control (*aiśvaryapaṅkajam*), twelve finger-breadths in extent, pure, blossoming, white (80–81b). Its stalk, rising from the bulb at the navel, is eight finger-breadths long (81cd). The eight petals of the lotus are to be understood to be the eight supernatural powers beginning with the capacity to become minuscule (*aṇimādiguṇāṣṭakam*), its pericarp is Dispassion (*vairāgyam*), its stalk is the Knowledge whose nature is Śiva (*jñānam śivātmakam*), and its bulb is the *śivadharmā*⁶⁶—this is how one should think of the lotus (82–83b). It is supreme, made up of *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and Śiva's *aiśvarya* (83cd).

⁶³ *śivadharmam ca tatkandam* [A11/3, 1645, 1694, T510, T75; *śivadharmaś ca tatkandam* A12/3; *śivadharmaś ca tatkanda* ed.

⁶⁴ *°vairāgyaśivaiśvaryamayam* [1645, 1694, ed.; *°vairāgyam śivaiśvaryamayam* A12/3; *°vairāgyam śiveśvaryamayam* A11/3; *°vairāgyam śivadharmamayam* T510, T75.

⁶⁵ T281 omits the whole of verse 83 (eyeskip).

⁶⁶ The four positive properties of the intellect recognized by the Sāṅkhyas are: *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*. Here Śivadharmā, 'the religion of Śiva [taught by the corpus of authoritative literature called *Śivadharmā*]', supplants *dharma*, 'Righteousness', for this work belongs to the *Śivadharmā* corpus.

The throne here, then, is an organically sprouting lotus-bud that unfolds in the chamber of the heart to receive the deity. *Dharma*, *jñāna* and the others of the positive properties of the intellect (*buddhidharma*) are not legs, but are homologized with parts of the lotus plant. As for the deity visualized there, he may simply be a bright sphere of the size of a thumb.

*jñātvā padmāsanam śārvaṃ⁶⁷ sarvaduḥkhāntam āpnuyāt
tatpadmakarnikāmadhye śuddham dīpaśikhākṛtim⁶⁸ 10:84
aṅguṣṭhamātram acalam dhyāyed oṅkāram īśvaram
kadambagolakākāraṃ tārārūpam iva⁶⁹ sthitam 10:85*

If one knows this Śaiva lotus-throne, one may attain the end of all sufferings. In the middle of the pericarp of its lotus one should visualise the Lord [as] OM, pure, like the flame of a lamp, the size of a thumb, immovable, the [spherical] shape of a Kadamba [flower], resting there like a star.

But one may instead optionally visualize an anthropomorphic form of Śiva. We should emphasize, however, that the *Śivadharmottara* does not speak of the later ubiquitous five-faced, ten-armed form, Sadāśiva, the central divinity of the Siddhānta, but rather a four-faced four-armed form holding the two attributes that came to be associated with the eastern face of Sadāśiva, namely, Tatpuruṣa.⁷⁰

*śuddhasphaṭikasamkāśaṃ jaṭāmukutaḥbhūṣitam⁷¹ 10:107
prasannavadanaṃ⁷² śāntaṃ sarvāvayavaśobhanam⁷³
sitapaṅkajamadhyasthaṃ⁷⁴ samādhiṣṭhaṃ⁷⁵ trilocanam 10:108
padmāsanasthaṃ acalam⁷⁶ īśatsamvrtalocanam
sabījapūrakakaraṃ⁷⁷ varadābhayaḥpāṇinam⁷⁸ 10:109*

⁶⁷ *śārvaṃ*] T281; *sā(?)tvaṃ(?)* A12/3; *sāntaṃ* A11/3; *śāvaṃ* 1645, 1694; *kāryaṃ* T510; *śāryaṃ* T75.

⁶⁸ *śuddham dīpaśikhākṛtim*] 1645, 1694, T510, ed.; ...A12/3; *śuddhadīpaśikhākṛtiḥ* A11/3; *śuddhadīpaśikhākṛtim* T281, T75.

⁶⁹ *tārārūpam iva*] A11/3, 1645, 1694, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *tārārūpavira* A12/3.

⁷⁰ See, for example, *Pañcāvaraṇastava* 47.

⁷¹ *°mukutaḥbhūṣitam*] 1645, 1694, ed.; *°maku...*A12/3; *°makuṭamaṇḍitam* T510, T75; *°makuṭabhūṣitam* A11/3, T281.

⁷² *°avadanaṃ*] A12/3, A11/3, 1694, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *°varadaṃ* 1645.

⁷³ *sarvāvayavaśobhanam*] A11/3; *sa...vaśobhanaṃ* A12/3; *sarvāvayavaśobhitam* 1694; *sarvāvayavaśodanam* 1645; *bhasmanā copaśobhitam* T510, T75; *sarvāvayavaśobhinam* T281ac; *sarvāvayavaśobhanam* T281pc, ed.

⁷⁴ *sitapaṅkajamadhyasthaṃ*] A12/3, A11/3, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *sita - - - - ttaṃ* 1645; *sitapadmajasa - -* 1694.

⁷⁵ *samādhiṣṭhaṃ*] 1645, 1694; *samādhisthaṃ* A12/3, A11/3, T510, T281, T75, ed.

⁷⁶ *acalam*] A11/3, T510, T281, T75, ed.; *amalam* 1645, 1694. This half-line is omitted in A12/3.

⁷⁷ *sabījapūrakakaraṃ*] 1694, T510, T281, T75; *savījakaka ...* A12/3; *sadbījapūrakakaraṃ* A11/3, 1645; *sadbījapūrakavāraṃ* ed.

⁷⁸ *°pāṇinam*] A12/3, 1694, T510, T281, T75; *°pāṇikam* A11/3, 1645, ed.

*dvīpicarmaparīdhānam*⁷⁹ *akṣamālākaram*⁸⁰ *haram*
*prabhākiraṇaparyantaṃ bhāsayantaṃ*⁸¹ *digānanam*⁸² 10:110

...crystalline, adorned with a chignon of matted locks, with serene face, calm, beauteous in all his parts, situated in the middle of a white lotus, absorbed in meditation, three-eyed, seated in lotus-posture, immobile, with slightly closed eyes, holding a pomegranate in one hand and with [two other] hands showing the gestures of giving and protection, clothed in a tiger-skin, with his [fourth and last] hand holding a rosary, Hara, with a ring of rays of light, shining, with a face for [each of the four cardinal] directions.⁸³

Conceptually at least, the *Śivadharmottara*'s throne seems ancient. We may notice its relative simplicity: it too involves the *buddhidharmas*, and three *maṇḍalas*, which here stand only for the three *guṇas* (and are not associated with sun, moon and fire). We may observe also that no mantras appear to be involved, but we should be aware that this might not be a criterion for determining the *Śivadharmottara* to be of an earlier genre, but rather a reflection of belonging to a different, non-tantric one. The meditator is encouraged to move beyond the *buddhidharmas* and the *guṇas* and there to install a motionless, thumb-sized spherical lord as OM. And if, instead, an anthropomorphic form is enthroned, what appears to be enjoined is a four-armed, four-faced Śiva. We should pause for a further moment to emphasize the absence of even the label Sadāśiva here. When we cast about in Puranic literature for accounts of Śaiva worship, Sadāśiva seems, by contrast, fairly ubiquitous. And where the name Sadāśiva is not actually used, the descriptions given often contain iconographical or theological details that confirm that the deity in question is the Sadāśiva of the developed Śaivasiddhānta.⁸⁴ Now such references may, of course, not belong to the earliest layers of the texts in

⁷⁹ *dvīpicarmaparīdhānam*] A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, ed.; *dvīpicarmāṇbaradharam* T510; *dvīpacarmaparīdhānam* T281; *dvīpi+(pa)+carmābaradharam* T75.

⁸⁰ *mālākaram*] 1645, 1694, ed.; *mālādharām* A12/3, A11/3, T510, T281, T75.

⁸¹ *°kīraṇaparyantaṃ bhāsayantaṃ*] conj.; *°kīraṇaparyantaṃ bhāsa ... ntaṃ(?)* A12/3; *°kīraparyantaṃ bhāsayantaṃ* 1645; *°kīraṇaparyantaṃ bhāsayantaṃ* A11/3, 1694; *°kīraṇaparyantabhābhāṣita*° T510; *°vabhāṣitatanuṃ bhābhāṣita*° T281; *°kīraṇavarṣantaṃ bhābhāṣita*° T75pc; *°kīraṇavarṣantabhābhāṣita*° 75ac; *°kīraṇaparyantair bhāsayanta*° ed.

⁸² *digānanam*] A12/3, A11/3, 1645, 1694, T510, ed.; *°digantaram* T281; *°digāsanam* T75.

⁸³ Unless we understand *digānana* to mean 'eight-faced'.

⁸⁴ *Viṣṇudharmottara*, 3.48; *Liṅgapurāṇa*, *uttarabhāga*, 23; *Saurapurāṇa*, 42 (the name Sadāśiva is not used); *Agnipurāṇa*, 74; *Garudapurāṇa*, *pūrvabhāga*, 23; *Vāyavyāsaṃhitā* of the *Śivapurāṇa*, *uttarakhaṇḍa*, 24, and so on.

The following editions of the *Purāṇas* have been used: *Agni puranam* by *Shrīmanmaharshi Vedavyas*, ed. Manasukharāya Mora. Gurumandal Series No. 17 (Calcutta: Gopal Printing Works, 1957) (I am grateful to Professor Jun Takashima for putting at my disposal his searchable electronic text of the *Agnipurāṇa*); *The Garuḍa Mahāpurāṇam* (Reprint of Venkateshwara Steam Press edition with introduction by R. N. Sharma and verse-index by *Nāgaśaraṇasīmha*), (Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1984); *Liṅga Purāṇa of Sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa*. With Sanskrit commentary Śivatoṣiṇī of Gaṇeśa Nātu, ed. J. L. Shastri (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985, reprint of edition of 1980);

which they have been found. But they still serve to highlight, by contrast, the absence of Sadāśiva here in the *Śivadharmottara* and thus further support the supposition that this is a relatively early passage, perhaps not simply a non-tantric one, but actually a pre-tantric one.

A Throne in the *Liṅga*: The *Guhyasūtra* of the *Niśvāsa*

We may contrast this now with the early Saiddhāntika accounts. Probably the earliest of these (although it comes from the latest of the five books of the work) is that of the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, in Chapter 1 of the *Guhyasūtra*.

caturasraṃ bhavet pīṭhaṃ anantaṃ hy āsanottamaṃ 103
dharmam jñānam ca vairāgyam aiśvaryaṃ ca catuṣṭayam
dharmam sphaṭikasamkāśam raktaṃ jñānam prakīrtitaṃ 104
pīṭhaṃ caiva hi vairāgyam aiśvaryaṃ kṛṣṇam eva ca
pīṭhasya caraṇā hy ete anantas tejasannibhaḥ 105
āgneyādikramas teṣāṃ vidikṣv evaṃ prakalpayet
kṛtaṃ tretāyugaṃ caiva dvāparaṃ kalir eva ca 106
gātrakāśaḥ tasya pīṭhasya pūrvād ārabhya vinyaset
sitaraktakṛṣṇapīṭhaḥ krama[śo dikṣu yo]jayed 107
śuklarakta pīṭhasyopari rājate
navaśaktikalāyuktaṃ pūrṇacandram ivoditaṃ 108
caturasre ca vikhyāto hy anantaṃ pīṭhasamjñitaṃ
aṣṭāsre sakalo jñeyas tasya dehaṃ nibodhata 109.

• 104a and 104c dharmam] *emend*; dharma NKW • 105ab vairāgyam aiśvaryaṃ kṛṣṇam eva ca] *conj.*; vairāgya...N; vairāgyamaiśva...K; vairāgyam ai...W;
 • 105cd pīṭhasya caraṇā hy ete anantas tejasannibhaḥ] *conj.*; pīṭhasya caraṇā hya ta anastejasannibhaḥ N (tops missing); pīṭhasya caraṇā...sttejasam nibhaiḥ K; pīṭhasya caraṇā...sannibhaḥ W • 106b vidikṣv evaṃ] *emend*; vidikcaivaṃ N; vidikṣvaivaṃ KW
 • 106c tretāyugaṃ] K; tretāyutaṃ NW • 107cd krama[śo dikṣu yo]jayed] *conj.*; ka... jayed N; ...K; krama...yet W • 108a śuklarakta...] W; ... NK • 108b pīṭhasyopari rājate] K; ...pari rājate N; ...pīṭhasyopari ...jate W • 109a caturasre ca vikhyāto] NKac; caturasre ca vikhyātaṃ Kpc; caturasreṣu vikhyāto W • 109c sakalo jñeyas] *conj.*; jñeyam NW; sakalā jñeyā K • 109d nibodhata] *emend*; nibodhataḥ N

Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa critically edited with Introduction, Notes, etc. Third Khaṇḍa (Text, Critical Notes etc.), ed. Priyabala Shah. Gaekwad's Oriental Series 130 (Vadodara: Oriental Institute, 1994); *Śivapurāṇa, khemarāja śrīkṛṣṇadāśena sampāditasya mumbāī śrī venkaṭeśvarasāhita mudraṇālayena prakāśitasya punarmudraṇam śrīśivamahāpurāṇam. The Śivamahāpurāṇam. dillī viśvavidyālaye saṃskṛtavibhāge prādhyaṇikena dā° puṣpēndrakumāra bhūmikayā sanāthitaṃ. nāgaśaraṇa siṃha sampādita ślokānukramanyā sahitaṃ* (Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1996, second edition of reprint); *Saurapurāṇa*, ed. Kāśīnāthaśāstrin Lele. Ānandāśramasaṃskṛtagraṇthāvalī 1 (Poona: Ānandāśrama Press, 1889) (śālivāhana 1811).

Studies in History, 27, 2 (2011): 221–250

We should point out at once that this unfortunately damaged passage is describing the worship of Śiva in the *liṅga* and not in the chamber of the heart. A translation is tricky, but must at least be attempted, so here is an extremely tentative one:

There should be a square stool: Ananta, the best of thrones. [First are] the set of four: *Dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*. *Dharma* [should be] crystalline, *jñāna* red, *vairāgya* yellow and *aiśvarya* black. For these are the feet of the stool. Ananta [should] be fire-like. The sequence [of the directions] in which they are [to be placed] begins with the South-East. [Beginning] thus, one should arrange [them] in the intermediate directions [SE, SW, NW, NE]. [The four ages of] Kṛta, Tretāyuga, Dvāpara and Kali are the cross-struts of that stool. One should arrange them beginning from the East. Respectively they are white, red, black, yellow. One should put them in the cardinal directions. Above the stool there shines a...white, red...[It is] connected with the nine divisions of [Śiva's] power, like the risen full moon. In the quadrangular [section of the *liṅga*] is proclaimed to be Ananta, known as the stool. [Above that,] upon the octagonal [section of the *liṅga*] is the embodied form [of the deity]. Hear from me [a description of] his body.

Note that the passage begins with what it calls *anantam āsanottamam* without explaining whether some person, snake or otherwise, is involved. Notice also that visualization as lions is not stipulated, that only the four positive properties of the intellect (*buddhidharma*) are involved and that in the intermediate directions we appear to have the *yugas* (as in the Vaiṣṇava *Jayākhyā* already discussed), not here identified with the four positive qualities of the intellect but as struts between the legs (in the way that entities with the names of the negative qualities of the intellect later appear in, for example, Aghoraśiva's throne). Finally, notice that there appears to be no lotus. I suspect, however, that it belongs there in the damaged first-half of verse 108: the thing that shines on top of the stool must surely be an eight-petalled lotus. Thus, the four-legged stool corresponds to the lowest part of the *liṅga*, which is square in section; the eight-petalled lotus corresponds to the middle section of the *liṅga*, which is octagonal, and the deity sits on that in such a way as to occupy the *liṅga*'s rounded upper part.

A Throne in the *Liṅga*: The *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha*

The *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha* furnishes us with another early example of building a throne for the worship of Śiva inside the *liṅga*⁸⁵:

⁸⁵ *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, NAK MS1–227, NGMPP Reel No. A41/14 (= N). Palm-leaf, early Nepalese 'Licchavi' script. Described by Hara Prasād Śāstri (1905:lxvī and 137–140). There are two apographs, both in Devanāgarī and on paper: NAK MS5-2401, NGMPP Reel No. A159/18 (= K), and Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London, Sanskrit MS1.33 (= W). The verse and chapter numeration used in our annotation is that of a collaborative edition in progress involving, among others, Dominic Goodall, Harunaga Isaacson and Alexis Sanderson. Diwakar Acharya, Peter Bisschop and Nirajan Kafle helped Dominic Goodall to produce the first complete transcription.

*liṅgaṃ ca piṇḍikāṃ caiva samprakṣālyā śivāmbhasā
arghaṃ⁸⁶ prakalpya pūrvoktaṃ aravindaṃ tato nyaset 18:17
dharmaṃ jñānaṃ ca vairāgyaṃ aiśvaryaṃ ca tathā param
anantaṃ hṛdayenaiva vinyased anupūrvaśaḥ 18:18
daleṣu⁸⁷ śaktayaḥ sthāpyāḥ sarvavyāpipadena tu
sthāpayed vyomarūpeṇa karṇikāyāṃ manonmanīm 18:19
tataḥ sarvagataṃ devaṃ śivaṃ praṇavaśaṃsthitam.*

Having washed the *liṅga* and its base (*piṇḍikā*) with Śiva-water he should prepare the above-taught guest-offering of water (*arghaṃ*), then he should install the lotus: he should place in due order *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, *aiśvarya* and then Ananta using the heart-mantra. On the petals are to be placed the [first eight of the nine] powers [beginning with *Vāmā*] using the word *sarvavyāpi* [from the tantra's root-mantra, the word *vyomavyāpin*]. On the pericarp he should install [the ninth power] Manonmanī using the word *vyoma* [from the same mantra]. Then [he should install] the Lord, Śiva, who is [in fact] all pervading, seated upon the syllable [OM].

As in the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃhitā*, no mention is made of the legs of the throne, namely, *dharma* and the others, being visualized as lions, nor are there even colours or directions prescribed, and no mention is made of the negative properties of the intellect (*adharma*, *ajñāna*, and so on). But this is clearly a description so skeletal that it can only really have been intended for readers who already knew how this sort of throne should be visualized. Lions might, therefore, have been intended.

Another Throne in the Heart: The *Niśvāsakārikā*

Let us now look at one more tantric passage, this time concerning the lotus throne in the heart of the body again and not in the *liṅga*⁸⁸:

*kadalīpuṣpasamākāśaṃ hṛdayaṃ sarvadehinām
tasya madhye sthitaṃ padmaṃ aṣṭapatraṃ sakarṇikam 36:12*

⁸⁶ *arghaṃ*] N; *arghyaṃ* B776, ed.

⁸⁷ *daleṣu*] N; *rateṣu* B776, ed.

⁸⁸ *Niśvāsakārikā* (IFP transcripts 17, 127 and 150, principally typed in respectively by S.A.S. Sarma, Nibedita Rout and R. Sathyanarayanan and organized and purged of some errors by Nirajan Kafle), *jñānakāṇḍa* 36:12ff. Collated here below are two transcripts of the French Institute of Pondicherry that transmit the text, IFP T. 17 (320ff) and IFP T. 127, (310f) as well as a labelled quotation of the same passage in the twelfth-century ritual manual of Jñānaśambhu, the *Jñānaratnāvalī*, from pp. 51–52 of MS 14898 in the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library in Madras (= J). For the text of the *Jñānaratnāvalī* of Jñānaśiva, see also Oriental Research Institute, Mysore, MS P3801. Palm-leaf, Nandināgarī. Also, GOML MS R14898 and its apograph IFP MS T. 231, as well as pp. 13–60 of IFP MS T. 106, all paper transcripts in Devanāgarī. The latter gives the text of what is probably a manual based upon the *Jñānaratnāvalī*, for details see Dominic Goodall, 'Problems of Name and Lineage: Relationships between South Indian Authors of the Śaiva Siddhānta' [a review article of Brunner, 1998], *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10, no. 2 (2000), 205–16; 209, fn. 11.

vitastimātram hṛdayam kamalam caturaṅgulaṃ
aṣṭāṅgulapramāṇam tu nābher ūrdhvaṃ vyavasthitam 36:13
padmanālam navadvāraṃ samantāt kaṇṭakānvitam
aṅguṣṭhaparvatulyātra karṇikā vai sakesarā 36:14
karṇikāyām bhavet sūryas tasya madhye tu candramāḥ
candramadhye bhaved vahnir vahnimadhye maheśvaraḥ 36:15
sadāśivo maheśaḥ syāt tasyāpi parataḥ śivaḥ
sarveṣāṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi pramāṇam śivanirmitam 36:16
kiñcid ūnataraṃ sūryam kuryāt somaṃ tathaiva ca
somād ūnam vijānīyād vahnimaṇḍalam uttamam 36:17
vidhūmanirmalam divyam ādityodayasannibham
bhūtāsumātram īśānam jvalatkaṭakasannibham 36:18
daśārdhāsyam paraṃ saumyam śuddhasphaṭikanirmalam
sadāśivam mahātmānam tasyāpy ūrdhvaṃ parāparam 36:19
sitaṃ sunirmalam divyam agrāhyaṃ paramaṃ śivam

• 13a vitastimātram] T127, J; vitastimātra T17 • 13d ūrdhvaṃ vyava° T17; a...vaṃ
 vyava° T127; ūrdhvaṃ ava° J • 14a padmanālam navadvāraṃ] T17, T127;
 padmanālīnayadvāraṃ J • 14b kaṇṭakānvitam] conj.; kāmānānvitam T17; karṇikānvitam
 T127; kaṭakānvitam J • 14cd °tulyātra karṇikā sā sakesarā] J; °tulyan tu karṇikā vai
 sakesarā T17; °tulya...T127 • 15a karṇikāyām bhavet sūryas] T17; ...yām bhavet
 sūryas T127; karṇikāyām bhavet sūryam J • 15d vahnimadhye] T17, T127; sūryamadhye
 J • 16a maheśaḥ syāt] J; maheśasya T17; maheśa...T127 • 16b tasyāpi parataḥ śivaḥ]
 T17; ...parataḥ śivaḥ T127; viparītam ataḥ sthitaḥ J • 17c kiñcid ūnataraṃ] T17;
 kiñcidvanataraṃ T127; kiñcidhīnataraṃ J • 18a vidhūma°] T17, T127; adhūma° J •
 18b ādityodaya°] T127, J; ādityoda° T17 • 18cd] T17, T127; om. J • 19a daśārdhāsyam
 paraṃ saumyam] conj.; daśārdhāsyaparam divyam T17, T127; daśārdhāsyādaram
 saumyam J • 19bcd & 20a] T17, J; om. T127 • 20b paramaṃ śivam] T17, J; pa...T127

The heart of all creatures is like the flower of a banana [in shape and colour]. In its
 centre is located an eight-petalled lotus with its pericarp. The heart is the span of the
 thumb to the middle finger in length and the lotus is four finger-breadths [across]; it
 stands up a distance of eight finger-breadths above the navel. The stem of the lotus has
 nine gates (?) and is wholly covered with spines. In it the pericarp, which is surrounded
 by filaments, is comparable to the [last] segment of the thumb [in size]. On the pericarp
 is [a disc of] the sun; in the middle of that is the moon; in the middle of the moon is [a
 disc of] fire; in the middle of the fire is the Lord. The Lord is Sadāśiva; higher still than
 him is [the supreme] Śiva. I shall tell you the dimensions created by Śiva of all these.
 One should make the [disc of the] sun somewhat smaller [than the pericarp]; similarly
 the moon; one should know the excellent disc of fire to be smaller than [that of] the
 moon, smokelessly pure, divine, like the risen sun [in colour], the very life-force of
 creatures (*bhūtāsumātram*), [their] overlord, like a flaming ring. [Upon that one should
 know there to be⁸⁹] the five-faced, highest, serene, crystalline, great Sadāśiva, and

⁸⁹ In fact it is not clear whether 18cd describes the disc of flames or whether it describes Sadāśiva
 sitting upon it.

above even him the highest of the high, white, utterly pure, divine, imperceptible, the supreme Śiva.

Quite without my explaining further the reader may already have seen one thing that I wished to suggest by presenting these numerous thrones together. I suspect that the developed thrones that we began considering are the result of a blend of two old enthronement models: that of the organic lotus that sprouts up through the body and blossoms (*Śivadharmottara*, *Niśvāsakārikā*), and that of a square lion-throne with an open lotus blossom upon it (*Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā*, *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha*). Further evidence for such a blending having taken place is the incoherence of some other accounts of thrones. The *Kiraṇa*, for example, which might be characterized as a middle-period Siddhāntatantra among the early (that is, pre-twelfth century AD) Saiddhāntika scriptures, and which we know to have been in existence at the latest in the ninth century AD, gives an extremely problematic throne. We learn that a *pīṭha* is to be built that will be made of the whole cosmos (*adhvan*).⁹⁰ Its feet are the four aeons (*yuga*); its bulb (*kanda*) is *prthivītattva*; its single stalk reaches up into the level of cosmic time (*kālatattva*); its spines are the fifty dispositions of the intellect (*pañcāśadbhāvakaṇṭakam*); its big knot (namely, the joint between stalk and flower) is in the level of primal matter (*māyātattva*) and the lotus blossom is in pure *vidyātattva*.⁹¹ The eight demiurges (*Vidyēśvara*) are on its petals and the nine Śaktis are on its filaments. The two highest reality levels of Śiva and Śakti are homologized with its pericarp and seeds.⁹² The whole is to be made up of sounds of the alphabet.⁹³ Thereafter, however, we learn that the four neuter vowels make *dharma* and the others, which have hitherto not been mentioned, that a certain Bindu is placed on top of Ananta and that on top of that is placed the lotus.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Kiraṇa* 14:19ab.

⁹¹ *Kiraṇa* 14:19c–14:20. Similar equations of parts of this lotus within the body with the *tattvas* of the cosmos are to be found in Vaiṣṇava texts, for instance, in *Lakṣmītantra* 43: see Marion Rastelli, *Die Tradition des Pāñcarātra im Spiegel der Pārameśvarasaṃhitā*. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 748 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 494ff and the table on pp. 616–17.

⁹² *Kiraṇa* 14: 21.

⁹³ *Kiraṇa* 14: 22ab.

⁹⁴ *Kiraṇa* 14: 19–23 (I have collated here the readings of the edition [= ed.], of NAK MS 5-893, NGMPP A 40/3 [= N], and NAK MS 5-4780, NGMPP B 172/21 [= D]):

kalpanīyaṃ tataḥ pīṭham aśeṣādhvavinirmītam
caturyugamahāpādāṃ prthivītattvakandakam 19
kālatattvāntanālaikam pañcāśadbhāvakaṇṭakam
māyātattvaṃ brhadgranthi śuddhavidyābjaśobhitam 20
vidyēśvaradalākṛāntaṃ śāktikesarasamīyutam
śivaśaktidvayārabdhakarmikābījaraḥṣitam 21
pīṭham evaṇīvidhaṃ kalpyaṃ mātṛkābījasaṃbhavam
napuṣsakacatuṣkeṇa dharmādīn parikalpayet 22
ṛbindu prṣṭham anantasyaṣṭ tatprṣṭham kamalaṃ bhavet
ṛkarmikānantacakreṇaṣṭ śeṣā 'nye nava śaktayaḥ 23

What is not clear is how this information is to be married with the throne described up to that point. Are ‘*dharma* and the others’ homologized with the four *yugas* that were earlier said to be the feet? And why does Bindu appear here? And if Ananta is the throne, then why is he beneath a Bindu that is surmounted by the lotus?⁹⁵ But indeed the whole account, with its mixture of elements belonging to a lotus-plant and to a four-footed stool, is perplexing.

The manner in which the well-known and very widely circulated eleventh-century Saiddhāntika manual of Somaśambhu integrates the lion-throne with the sprouting lotus is to have Ananta himself to be that lotus. When Ananta first appears above Ādhāraśakti he is to be visualized as having the form of a lotus bud,⁹⁶ but this then sprouts up and opens to form the lotus above the level of the lions’ heads.⁹⁷ The lion legs, then, are here grouped around the lotus stalk, and they support the lotus blossom once it grows up and opens above them. Ananta himself is the lotus, or, as the *Pūrva-Kāmika* suggestively expresses it⁹⁸: *kṣīrābhdhitaḥ samutpannasaroruhasamākṛtim*—‘he has the form of a lotus rising from the ocean of milk’. Here, once again, the ocean of milk appears after a fashion that parallels the Pāñcarātra throne-model.

• 20a *kālātattvāntanālaikaṃ*] ed., Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha’s quotation ad *Mrgendra-kriyāpāda* 3:12; *kālātattvāntanau lakṣaṃ* N; *kālātattvāntanālaikaṃ* D • 20b *pañcāśadbhāvakaṇṭhakam*] Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha; *pañcāśadbhāvakaṇṭhakam* ND; *pañcāśadbhāvakaṇṭhakam* ed.; *pañcāśadbhāvakaṇṭhakam* ed. (*varia lectio*) • 20c *māyātattvaṃ bṛhadgranthi*] NDed.; *māyātattvabṛhadgranthi* Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha • 21a *°dalākṛāntaṃ*] ND, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha; *°dalacchannaṃ* ed. • 21cd *°rabdhakarṇikābījaraṅgitaṃ*] Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha; *°rabdhaṃ karṇikābījaraṅgitaṃ* N; *°rabdhaṃ karṇikābījaraṅgitaṃ* D; *°rabdhaṃ karṇikābījaraṅgitaṃ* ed. • 22a *pīṭhaṃ evaṇṇidhaṃ kalpyaṃ*] D; *pīṭha evaṇṇidhā kalpyā* N; *pīṭhaṃ evaṇṇidhaṃ kalpya* ed. • 22b *mātrkābījasaṃbhavaṃ*] NDed.; *aśeṣādhvavirmitaṃ* Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha • 22c *napuṃsakacatuṣkeṇa*] N; *napuṃsakāścātuṣkeṇa* D; *napuṃsakān catuṣkoṇe* ed. • 22d *dharmādīn*] ed.; *dharmādīn* N; *dharmādi* D • 23ab *anantasya tatpṛṣṭhaṃ kamalaṃ*] ed.; *alantasya tatpṛṣṭhakamalam* ND • 23c *karṇikānantacakraṇa*] ed.; *karṇikānantavaktreṇa* NDac; *karṇikānāṇaṃ krameṇaiva* Dpc • 23d *śeṣā* ‘nye ND; *śeṣāḥ* syur ed.

⁹⁵ The redactor of the *Pūrva-Kāmika* has adapted the *Kiraṇa*’s lotus throne as an alternative and carefully reproduced exactly the same ambiguity: the *Kiraṇa*’s account has been reproduced, with some paraphrasing and omissions (for example, of one set of nine *Śaktis*), as an alternative throne-building procedure in *Pūrva-Kāmika* 4:316ff.

⁹⁶ SP1, III: 48:

kundendudhavaloddaṇḍapayojamukulākṛtim
yajet kūrmaśilārūḍhaṃ śivasyānantam āsanam.

‘One should worship Ananta, the throne of Śiva, as mounted upon the turtle-stone [that is beneath the *liṅga* and as] having the form of an upright bud of a lotus that is white as jasmine and as the moon.’

⁹⁷ SP1, III: 51:

utphullāṣṭadalam śvetaṃ tad evānantapaṇṭkajam
sampījya siṅghavaktroḍhvaṃ padmamudrāṃ pradarśayet.

‘One should venerate that same Ananta-lotus, white, with its eight petals opened above the faces of the lions [that are the feet of the throne] and one should display the lotus-gesture.’

⁹⁸ *Pūrva-Kāmika* 4:294ab.

But this mode of integrating lion-feet and a lotus stalk is not the solution that has passed into the later South Indian ‘Temple *Āgamas*’, the Saiddhāntika scriptures that are transmitted only in South India and of which no trace is to be found until well after the twelfth century AD. And most of these add a further complexity to the throne: they divide it up into five sections that seem, in some contexts, to be usable independently. These are, counting from the bottom in the order given in the *Ajitāgama*⁹⁹: *anantāsana*, *siṃhāsana*, *yogāsana*, *vimalāsanam* and *padmāsana*. Almost all the secondary literature anachronistically reads these five tiers back into earlier descriptions of thrones, which is why they must at least be mentioned in passing here; but no work that can be demonstrated to have been composed in the twelfth century AD or before has them. I shall therefore not deal further with these five tiers here.¹⁰⁰

Returning to our structural theme, it is clear that the problematic integration of a four-footed throne with a growing lotus has been achieved in a variety of ways and it seems likely that the two did not originally form part of the same enthronement procedure. The earliest Saiddhāntika accounts are of the four-footed type and seem very simple: they may involve only *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*, not necessarily visualized as lions, supporting a lotus-blossom-seat.

I have explained that it is a necessary but regrettable weakness of this presentation that I am concentrating particularly on Saiddhāntika sources that bear upon a subject that seems to be far from uniquely Saiddhāntika. But it is in fact not unuseful to give special treatment to the Saiddhāntika sources: some of them may be among the oldest—or at least the oldest datable—sources that give us tantric thrones, and it is clear that the Siddhānta has a special status among tantric cults as being both relatively ancient and as having had a very wide influence. Its influence in ritual is in fact remarked upon by the eleventh-century Kashmirian exegete Kṣemarāja towards the beginning of his commentary on the *Svacchandatantra*’s treatment of daily ritual, for he there implies that in the practice of many worshippers a certain element in the daily worship taught in that non-Saiddhāntika text is commonly wrongly substituted by the Saiddhāntika norm (the element in question is the placement of deities on the doorposts) he observes: *prāyaś ca siddhāntapriyo lokaḥ siddhāntakramam āśritaḥ* (‘In general, people are fond of the Siddhānta and follow the Saiddhāntika sequence’).

In short, it is clear that we should be ready to expect to detect traces of a lot of cross-system borrowing in the construction of a liturgy of visual prayer. A given religious tradition may regard the texts of another as not authoritative

⁹⁹ *Ajitāgama*, *kriyāpāda* 20:143ff. The *Ajitāgama* was first edited by N.R. Bhatt. 3 vols. Publications de l’IFI No. 24 (Pondicherry: IFI, 1964, 1967 and 1991); see also, *Ajītamahātantram. The Great Tantra of Ajita*, ed. N.R. Bhatt, Jean Filliozat, Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts & Motilal Banarsidass, 2005).

¹⁰⁰ For further details about the five-tiered throne, see Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 22–23, and the forthcoming third volume of the *Tāntrikābhidhānaśa*, s.v. *pañcāsana*.

with respect to doctrine or religious performance and yet be influenced by them. In this case, as in many others, I suspect that the Saiddhāntika paddhati-tradition may have drawn upon the non-Saiddhāntika *Svacchandatantra*,¹⁰¹ whose ideas have therefore been fed into the temple *Āgamas* known to us only from post-twelfth-century South Indian sources. We may note that entities with the names of the negative propensities of the *buddhi*, that is to say of *adharma*, *ajñāna*, *avairāgya*, *anaiśvarya*, a feature that appears first to be traceable in the *Svacchandatantra*, appear to be absent from all pre-twelfth-century Saiddhāntika sources with the exception of the celebrated eleventh-century ritual manual of Somaśambhu.¹⁰² Similarly, the two ‘cushions’ or ‘coverings’ (*chadana/chada*) placed below the lotus blossom in the first throne we considered are rare in demonstrably pre-tenth-century Saiddhāntika accounts¹⁰³; but they became usual in twelfth- and post-twelfth-century Saiddhāntika works.¹⁰⁴ Once again, it seems possible that, though perhaps not first introduced into Saiddhāntika works from the *Svacchandatantra*, they might nonetheless owe their popularity there to the influence of the *Svacchanda*.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, from the Siddhānta both these cushions and the group of entities beginning with *adharma* have passed into the temple-worship of Skanda (see, for example, *Kumāratāntra* 5:56–5:57 and 37:58).¹⁰⁶

In the case of the *Kumāratāntra*, which seems as a whole to have been closely calqued upon post-twelfth-century South Indian Saiddhāntika temple *Āgamas*, we find the entities of the throne and the labels for them adopted together without change. Moreover, the starting point in our discussion of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava thrones was the observation that there was a considerable body of shared terminology. Thrones for other deities that are similarly calqued upon versions of

¹⁰¹ For evidence of the dependence of Saiddhāntika practice upon the influence of the *Svacchandatantra* in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Alexis Sanderson, ‘The Śaiva Religion among the Khmers (Part I)’, *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 90–91 (2003–2004 [appeared in 2004]), 349–462; 358–60.

¹⁰² For further detail about the presence and absence of these in various thrones, see Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 123–26.

¹⁰³ Among the tenth and pre-tenth-century occurrences not included in the discussion by Goodall et al. (*Ibid.*, 126–27), we may mention the several instances in the *Devayāmata* (also known as *Niśvāsākhyaamahātāntra*, NAK MS 1-279. NGMPP Reel No. A 41/15; for example, n ff. 26–27 of NGMPP A 41/15), one instance in *Niśvāsakārikā*, 48:58 (IFI T. 17, 528), and Nārāyaṇakāṇṭha’s allusion in his commentary on *Mṛgendra*, *kriyāpāda* 1:5.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, *Śivapūjāstava* 14c; *Pañcāvaraṇastava* 21; *Pūrva-Kāmika* 4:297; *Suprabhedāgama* (printed by Mayilai-Aḷakappa Mudaliyār, no editor accredited [Madras {Cintātiripēṭṭai}: Civañānapotayantracālai, 1908, Kaliyuga 5009]), *kriyāpāda* 8:147–49; *Ajita* 20:147c–48b; *Uttara-Kāraṇa* 96:19.

¹⁰⁵ For references to their appearance in non-Saiddhāntika Śaiva literature, see TAK 2 s.v. *chadana*.

¹⁰⁶ See *Kumāratāntram (tamiḷ moli peyarppu)*. patippācīriyār: civākama kalāṇiti kulapati vai. vicvaṇāta civārccāriyār[.] śrī kāñci kāmakoṭi pīṭa vyāsa pārata kalāti[.] satas samāja veta civākama pātacālai[.] allūr, tiruccirāppaḷi māvaṭṭyam [=Allur, Trichy Dist.] (Pudukkottai: Sarma’s Sanatorium Press, 2003).

the thrones we have examined can be found in tantric and Purāṇic literature.¹⁰⁷ The case of the throne of the sun is somewhat different. Here, according to the eleventh-century Śaiva guru Somaśambhu,¹⁰⁸ the construction of the throne begins with the veneration of an entity called Prabhūtāsana, and this is followed by venerating four legs called Vimala, Sāra, Ārādhyā and Paramasukha, then a lotus, on whose eight petals are eight powers called Dīptā, Sūkṣmā, Jayā, Bhadrā, Vibhūti, Vimalā, Amoghā and Vidyutā, with a ninth, Sarvatomukhī, on the pericarp in the centre. This is the throne for the sun (*arkāsana*). Superficially, there may seem to be little resemblance to the thrones we have examined above, other than the fact that the lotus has eight petals, a detail so commonplace that it is hardly worthy of comment, and the fact that there are nine powers arranged on the lotus, just as there are nine powers on Śaiva thrones.¹⁰⁹ But when we realize that the legs of the throne are to be placed, once again, in the intermediate directions beginning in the SE, and that they take the form of four lions coloured white, red, yellow and black, then we can see that here too the throne is extremely close to early Śaiva models, even if the names are unrelated: Vimala, Sāra, Ārādhyā and Paramasukha are the same as *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*, and Prabhūtāsana is equivalent to Anantāsana. Of course this is sun-worship as presented in a Śaiva source rather than in a Saura one, and so one might be inclined to suspect that the throne of a Saura-tantra would look very different, but, thanks to Dr Diwakar Acharya's work, we can now confirm that Somaśambhu's source for the throne of the sun was almost certainly the sole surviving solar tantra, namely, the *Saurasamhitā* (of which Dr Acharya has now prepared a first edition).¹¹⁰ (That tantra is nonetheless itself already a heavily Śaivized work based on a recension of the Śaiva *Kālotara*, as is hinted in 1:5.)

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, the descriptions of the visualization and worship of the many deities given in the *Śaradātīlaka* (cf. *Śaradā-Tīlaka Tantram*. Text with Introduction, ed. Arthur Avalon [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001, reprint of first edition printed in Calcutta in 1933]), or the accounts of *sāmānyapūjā* for Viṣṇu and others, of *viṣṇupūjā* and of *gaṇeśapūjā* in *Agnipurāṇa* 21, 33 and 71, respectively; of *navavyūhārcana*, *vāsudevapūjā*, *mṛtyuñjayapūjā*, *gopālapūjā* and *śrīdharapūjā* in *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *pūrvabhāga* 11, 12, 18, 28 and 30, respectively; of *viṣṇupūjā* in *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (with the commentary of Śrīdharasvāmīn, ed. J.L. Shastri [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983]), 11.27, particularly verse 25; of *aghorārcana* in *Liṅgapurāṇa*, *uttarabhāga* 26, particularly verses 13–14, and so on.

¹⁰⁸ *Karmakāṇḍakramāvalī*, SPI, 2.5ff.

¹⁰⁹ The Vaiṣṇava throne of the *Jayākhyasamhitā* does not have these eight powers, but, as Rastelli records (The *Āsana* According to the Pārameśvarasamhitā', 15, fn. 28), the *Pauṣkarasamhitā*, another Pāñcarātra scripture, has 16 *kalās*. This may correspond to the two sets of Śaktis (one beginning with Vāmā and the other with Vibhu) that we find in some Śaiva works, for example, *Kiraṇa*, 14:24–26 (pace Sanderson, 'Maṇḍala and Āgamic Identity, 179, fn. 48).

¹¹⁰ The verses in question are *Saurasamhitā* 4:15–16 (edition in progress of Diwakar Acharya). The names of the throne-elements appear there in feminine forms and without mention of their visualization as lions. The omission of the latter detail could be variously explained: one could, for example, argue that the visualization of the feet of a 'throne' (*sinhāsana*) as lions was so obvious as not to require stating.

A Prototype?

What can we deduce from all of the above? The thrones of worship we have examined appear to be the fruit of a strange sort of dialogue between competitors. Rather than rejecting the imaginary creations of earlier rivals and beginning afresh, the religious minds who devised these thrones seem to have been inclusivists: each new throne adopts, adapts, rearranges and, if necessary, reinterprets the elements of previous thrones and builds them into a new structure, expressing the supremacy of the deity seated upon it. The more evolved and more complex scaffolds that we examined at the beginning bear the marks of this inclusivist proceeding all over them in the guise of incoherences of structure and nomenclature. The near constancy of such non-functional components or non-symbolic symbols as the three discs, which we have seen homologized with all manner of triads, can surely only be explained if we regard them as part of a shared inheritance so often remannered that their earlier role is past recognition. The most harmonious throne by far appears to be that of the *Śivadharmottara*. For there, *dharma* is fittingly the bulbous root that is the fundament for religious life; *aiśvarya* is fittingly the lotus blossom in the heart on which the deity is enthroned, its eight petals being the eight yogic powers that constitute *aiśvarya*; and the three discs are fittingly Tamas, Rajas and Sattva, the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti* in the ontology of the Sāṅkhyas, the matter that is transcended by the enthroned deity. But we cannot of course conclude from the appearance of this simple, harmonious and conceptually early throne in the *Śivadharmottara* that this was *the* prototype or that it was necessarily a Śaiva creation. After all, the theists seem to have adopted and adapted this same ontology. And in the case of this particular account of the *Śivadharmottara*, we find it extremely closely echoed by an uncannily similar Vaiṣṇava account in Chapter 373 of the *Agnipurāṇa*: many of the verses we have hitherto quoted are shared by both passages; indeed the majority of the lines in *Agnipurāṇa* 373 are actually to be found in some form somewhere in *Śivadharmottara* 10! Now the extant *Agnipurāṇa* is clearly a much later composition, but it is, as is well known, a scissors-and-paste redaction put together out of a number of disparate works.¹¹¹ In other words, a Vaiṣṇava source earlier than the *Agnipurāṇa* probably existed with essentially the same throne.¹¹² And even if that Vaiṣṇava source was not earlier than the *Śivadharmottara*, the possibility that this throne was in origin Vaiṣṇava cannot absolutely be ruled out. I am aware of no Buddhist textual

¹¹¹ See, for example, R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs* (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1940), 134–40. For a recent article that identifies more of the Vaiṣṇava tantric source material, see Marion Rastelli, ‘The “Pāñcarātra Passages” in *Agnipurāṇa* 21–70’, in *Mélanges tantriques à la mémoire d’Hélène Brunner: Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner*, ed. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux. Collection Indologie 106 (Pondicherry: IFP/EFE0, 2007), 187–229.

¹¹² As Marion Rastelli has pointed out to me (letter of 14 January 2010), there are similarities (though no close verbal echoes) between *Śivadharmottara* 10:84–5 and *Jayākhyasamhitā* 12:25–28 and 12:38–41.

parallels to the sort of blend of *padmāsana* and *siṃhāsana* that we have been considering, but there is an illustration and brief discussion of an eighth-century bronze image from Sirpur representing Cundā or Tārā that may attest to a similar tradition in Goodall et al.¹¹³

Aggressive Inclusivism

There is also a more aggressive inclusivist strategy that can be adopted, either alone or in conjunction with the kind of radical editorial reworkings that we have witnessed, and that is to take the deity of the rival and show that deity seated or prostrate or crushed beneath the feet of a higher, transcendent deity. This is of course well known from tantric Buddhism¹¹⁴ and we have alluded to this strategy as used within Śaivism, by the Trika, in our introductory abstract, but several other instances could be adduced. Thus, the goddess Bhairavamaṅgalā rests on a throne that might have been drawn from a Saiddhāntika work, except that it includes the corpse of Sadāśiva (*mahāpreta*),¹¹⁵ as does Bhairava in the *Svacchandatantra*,¹¹⁶ where the ‘corpse’ is sentient (*sacetana*) and smiling. And we find both fierce goddesses, such as Kubjikā,¹¹⁷ and mild ones, such as Tripurasundarī, regularly said to be enthroned above five corpses (*pañcapretāsana*),¹¹⁸ namely, those of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśvara and Sadāśiva. This is an eloquent manner of expressing that, for instance, the *Svacchandatantra* is a revelation that encompasses the truths recognized by the Śaivasiddhānta, but that it also transcends them.

Nothing so dramatic is to be found in the thrones upon which the mild, consortless lacto-vegetarian Sadāśiva reigns; but it is worth briefly returning to Ananta at the base of the throne and considering whether some comparable fashion of

¹¹³ Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, Plates 43 and 61–62.

¹¹⁴ Ferocious Buddhist deities are not only decked with fierce Śaiva attributes (see Alexis Sanderson, ‘The Śaiva Age’, in *Genesis and Development of Tantra*, ed. Shingo Einoo [Tokyo: University of Tokyo, Institute of Oriental Culture, 2009], 41–349; 169–72), but they also stand upon Śaiva deities that they have emulated and transcended (*ibid.*, 172):

‘In clear expression of this transcendence Heruka/Vajrarudra and Vajravārāhī are depicted and visualized standing on the sprawling, terrified bodies of a black Bhairava and a red, emaciated Kālārātri, their own pre-Buddhist identities as the principal deities of the Vidyāpīṭha.’

¹¹⁵ Thus, *Bhairavamaṅgalā* 102, in which, unusually, the corpse is beneath, rather than on top of the lotus. For the text of this work, I have relied on an unpublished e-text of 1997, kindly furnished by Somdeva Vasudeva, based on NAK MS pam 687, NGMPP B 27/21.

¹¹⁶ *Svacchandatantra* 2:81.

¹¹⁷ For example, in *Kubjikopaniṣat* (cf. *The Kubjikā Upaniṣad*, ed. and trans. Teun Goudriaan and J.A. Schoterman (Groningen Oriental Studies 10, Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), 2.13; 7.77. For an image, see Mark S.G. Dyczkowski, *The Cult of the Goddess Kubjikā: A Preliminary Comparative Textual and Anthropological Survey of a Secret Newar Goddess*. Nepal Research Center Publications 23 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001), Plate 1.

¹¹⁸ For example, in *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *pūrvabhāga* 24:5. For an image, see, for example, Dyczkowski, *The Cult of the Goddess Kubjikā*, Plate 7, in which the five ‘corpses’ appear simply as heads.

expressing supremacy was what first motivated his inclusion. I have suggested earlier that this Ananta seemed likely to have been originally the cosmic serpent at the base of the cosmos and likely therefore to have been incorporated into Śaiva thrones from a Vaiṣṇava source; but we have found no such source, and Ananta figures, without any serpentine characteristics, in what may be our earliest tantric thrones, namely, the two Śaiva thrones of the *Guhyasūtra* of the *Niśvāsa* and of the *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṅgraha*. It is therefore at least possible that the Ananta who figures at the bottom of the Śaiva throne might originally have been intended to be Viṣṇu, whose position in the throne was chosen to express his subordination.¹¹⁹

Some Conclusions

What I hope to have shown in this article is that prescriptions of visualization reflect competitive sparring between rival religions. This is of course most obvious in thrones that incorporate the corpses of transcended deities; but it can also be seen in the widespread imitative borrowing of successful ideas. Such borrowing can take the form of copy-and-paste redaction, where rituals or ritual elements have been borrowed, with varying degrees of modification, as blocks of text from rival textual traditions,¹²⁰ or it can be the result of imitation (perhaps sometimes unconscious) of the practices of a rival system that is followed by one's neighbours.¹²¹ Some modifications that account for the evolution of the throne no doubt have little or nothing to do with rivalry. Some elaboration, for instance, appears to be the result of embroiderers filling out known sequences: the addition of *adharma*, *ajñāna*, and so on may be a case in point. For why include the negative propensities of the intellect? Perhaps only because they belong to the same ogdoad as *dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aiśvarya*. Similarly, some elaboration is little more than the integration of colourful visual detail: Instead of just four lions, for instance, some prescriptions have each lion thronged with further lions of the same colour. Other variations seem to be the result of a quest to find the best solutions to structural and interpretive problems that are created by other modifications (as we have seen, smoothly fusing a *śiṃhāsana* with a *padmāsana* tested the ingenuity of visualizers).

The most confusing sort of elaboration that we have seen is the adding of layers of theological interpretation by homologization: to make the throne fit

¹¹⁹ In Śaiva lists of the ten guardians of the directions (*lokapāla*), the guardians of Up and Down are Brahmā and Viṣṇu, respectively, whereas in Vaiṣṇava lists they are Brahmā and the cosmic serpent. For details, see Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 177–79.

¹²⁰ We have seen this in the parallel accounts of the throne furnished by *Śivadharmottara* 10 and *Agnipurāṇa* 373. For plentiful examples of this that do not concern the throne, see Sanderson, 'History through Textual Criticism'.

¹²¹ This is the kind of case that Kṣemarāja draws attention to in the context of *dvārapūjā* (as already alluded to).

against an evolving background of doctrine, some inherited structures have had to be frequently reinterpreted. The clearest example of this is furnished by the three discs upon the lotus. I have already expressed the opinion that they were probably in origin symbols of the three *guṇas* that, according to Sāṅkhyas, pervade all matter, and it is no doubt obvious that their being identified with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, and with triads of other theological constructs (such as Ātma, Vidyā and Śiva; *meva*, *mātr* and *māna*; and *jñāna*, *kriyā* and *icchā*), is secondary. I have not commented hitherto on why they might have become homologized with sun, moon and fire. The order here is noteworthy: whereas the *guṇas* are superimposed upon each other in a logical order—with Tamas, the coarsest, at the bottom, and Sattva, the purest, at the top—here the solar disc is at the bottom, overlaid by the lunar one, which is in turn overlaid by a disc of fire. I think, therefore, that these discs, in this homologization, are probably conceived of as openings of the three principal tubes (*nāḍī*) of the yogic body, commonly known as Iḍā, Piṅgalā and Suṣumnā, which meet in the heart.¹²² The two outer tubes are associated with the sun and moon, and the central and preeminent one, Suṣumnā, is associated with fire.

By providing the accounts of thrones that I believe to be among the earliest tantric prescriptions on this subject to survive, I hope that I have also been able to improve a little upon our understanding of the paths of development that enthronement took in the course of its competition-inspired evolution.

¹²² This suggestion was tentatively adumbrated in Goodall et al., *The Pañcāvaraṇastava of Aghoraśivācārya*, 131, but the significance of the curious order at the time escaped me.